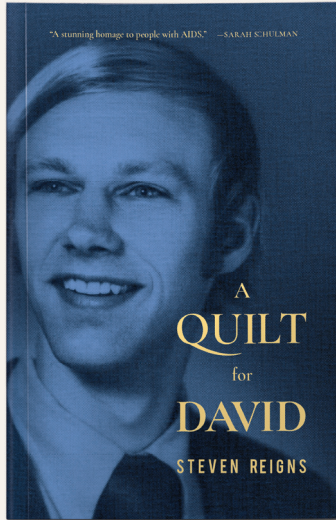


# Forthcoming from City Lights Publishers



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## A Quilt for David

By Steven Reigns

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The hidden history of a vulnerable gay man whose life and death were turned into tabloid fodder.

“I found this an incredibly moving book. Reigns deals in hard truths, revisiting one man’s life and death, and our collective queer history.”

—Justin Torres, author of *We the Animals*

“A stunning homage to people with AIDS, *A Quilt for David* is a wrenching investigation into the experience of ‘the innocent victim’: white straight women and closeted white men who had to retain an inhumane level of capitulation to patriarchy in order to be eligible for compassion.”

—Sarah Schulman, author of *Conflict Is Not Abuse*

IN A SMALL conservative Florida town in the 1980s, eight patients alleged that Dr. David Acer, their dentist, infected them with HIV. David’s gayness, along with his sickly appearance from his own AIDS-related illness, made him the perfect scapegoat and victim of mob mentality. In these early years of the AIDS epidemic, when transmission was little understood, and homophobia rampant, people like David were villainized. Accuser Kimberly Bergalis landed a *People* magazine cover story, while others went on talk shows and made front page news.

With a poet’s eulogistic and psychological intensity, Steven Reigns recovers the life and death of this man who also stands in for so many lives destroyed not only by HIV, but a diseased society that used stigma against the most vulnerable. It’s impossible not to make connections between this story and how the twenty-first century pandemic has also been defined by medical misinformation and cultural bias.

Inspired by years of investigative research into the lives of David and those who denounced him, Reigns has stitched together a hauntingly poetic narrative that retraces an American history, questioning the fervor of his accusers, and recuperating a gay life previously shrouded in secrecy and shame.

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STEVEN REIGNS, Los Angeles poet and educator, was appointed the first Poet Laureate of West Hollywood. He has two previous collections, *Inheritance* and *Your Dead Body is My Welcome Mat*, and over a dozen chapbooks. Reigns edited *My Life is Poetry*, showcasing his students' work from the first-ever autobiographical poetry workshop for LGBTQ seniors. Reigns has lectured and taught writing workshops around the country to LGBTQ youth and people living with HIV. He worked for a decade as an HIV test counselor in Florida and Los Angeles. Currently he is touring *The Gay Rub*, an exhibition of rubbings from LGBTQ landmarks around the world, and has a private practice as a psychotherapist. He lives in West Hollywood, CA.



### Praise for *A Quilt for David*

“Steven Reigns lifts David Acer thirty years after his death to show the naked cost of violent, unexamined public opinion around the catastrophe of AIDS. This poetry masterfully documents the tangle of hatred and lies haunting a generation of survivors. I am often grateful for what poems give to me, most especially the ones in this book.”

—CAConrad, author of *AMANDA PARADISE: Resurrect Extinct Vibration*

“*A Quilt for David* is a work that hybridizes politics, queer social history, AIDS, and the latent puritanism of this country into a page-turner that, despite a 30-year gap, feels fully, sickeningly contemporary. This book doesn't only echo our current political moment, it dissects it as it's being born.”

—Jonathan D. Katz, activist, art historian, educator, and writer

“For those who've forgotten or never heard of David Acer—the gay dentist accused of infecting Kimberly Bergalis and other patients—*A Quilt for David* is a searing recreation of that horrible chapter in the early stages of AIDS.”

—Andrew Holleran, author of *Chronicle of a Plague, Revisited: AIDS and Its Aftermath*

“This writing is energetic, alive, and uncensored. Steven Reigns has studied poetry and deeply researched a moment in history. *A Quilt for David* breaks traditional structure and cracks open what we thought we knew of the past.”

—Natalie Goldberg, author of *Writing Down the Bones*

“Like so many of us born into the Age of AIDS, who saw the epidemic from childhood and grew up in a world forever changed by loss, Reigns is searching for the stories of our ancestors.”

—Justin Elizabeth Sayre, author of *From Gay to Z: A Queer Compendium*

